

REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

August 13, 2003

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Snodgrass, Commissioners Allen, Dunn, McCarthy, Petitpas

STAFF PRESENT: Lori Peckol, Terry Marpert, Redmond Planning Department

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chair Snodgrass in the Public Safety Building Council Chambers. Chair Snodgrass noted for the record that Commissioner Bluechel was excused.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as printed.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. July 23, 2003 Public Hearing

Chair Snodgrass called attention to the first paragraph on page 3 and asked to have the first sentence revised to read "Chair Snodgrass asked if existing industrial property owners could realize a benefit from a change in zoning because property values would rise accordingly."

The minutes as amended were adopted by acclamation.

B. July 30, 2003 Study Session

The minutes as submitted were adopted by acclamation.

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Ms. Judy Wilman, 12323 209th Avenue NE, spoke on behalf of herself and as a representative of the King County Executive Horse Council and raised the issue of an equestrian zoning or recognition of equestrian uses in the Comprehensive Plan. The planning area for Redmond extends beyond the city limits, though there is no current move to expand the urban growth area. Before such an expansion does take place, certain steps should be taken. Protective policies and zoning should be included in the Comprehensive Plan. To the east of the city is a strong and healthy equestrian community with access to a variety of trails that connect to regional and city facilities.

The county has officially recognized the area as an equestrian community and has offered a number of protections. When the area is annexed, the city should already have in place policies to protect the community trail systems and established guidelines for urban horse keeping. Protecting existing trails is much easier as an area develops than establishing trails after an area is developed. The King County Executive Horse Council is willing to assist in the city in whatever way is necessary.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the policies and regulations in place under King County still apply once an area is incorporated into a city. Lori Peckol, planner, said annexed areas must be brought under the control of the policies and regulations of the annexing jurisdiction. Chair Snodgrass said the accepted practice is to establish pre-annexation zoning so that once areas are annexed the zoning regulations are already in place.

CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEARING AND STUDY SESSION

Preliminary Preferred Growth Strategy

Ms. Peckol noted that the intent of the continued public hearing was to focus on the proposed transportation framework policies and vision, which were not available at the initial public hearing. She said the City Council has a study session scheduled for August 26 to consider the recommendation of the Commission; Council action on the Vision, Goals and Framework Policy Element is slated for September.

Michael Johnson, Corporate Environmental Manager for Genie Industries, said the business community recognizes the difficulty and complexity of the Commission in developing policies for the city. He pointed out that the business community is a critical part of the community, adding that economic diversity is a necessary part of any vital and robust community. The current language in the framework policy ignores the generations of history and millions of dollars invested in industries in Southeast Redmond. The implications of a lack of planning are real and profound. The Commissioners were shown a photograph of a new three-story apartment building across the street from the Genie Industries south campus, and a photograph showing the view from the first floor of the new apartments looking toward the Genie Industries. It was noted that policies that lead to conflicting land uses do not build communities; they hurt the quality of life for all concerned. There are 704 persons employed by Genie Industries at the south campus and they are all working hard to accommodate their new neighbors. Existing land uses must be included in the framework policy. The policy should respect the thousands of families that depend on Southeast Redmond businesses for their livelihood.

Commissioner McCarthy asked how the employees of Genie Industries have had to change the ways they do business in order to accommodate the adjacent residential uses. Mr. Johnson said a woman who recently moved into the area has contacted Genie Industries to express concern about the noise of the exhaust fans that come on at 5:30 a.m. The fans are necessary to preserve the air quality in the manufacturing facility. In order to accommodate the neighbors, an engineering solution is being sought.

Chair Snodgrass asked how the proposed framework policies would make the problem worse. Mr. Johnson allowed that conflicting uses already exist but stressed that references to SE Redmond as a specific location for manufacturing and industrial uses have been expressly omitted from the framework policies. Referring to FW-14, Chair Snodgrass pointed out that the most recent edit of the language refers to manufacturing uses in Overlake, Willows and other suitable areas. Mr. Johnson requested to have a specific reference to Southeast Redmond as a place suitable for manufacturing and industrial uses.

Ms. Marcelle Pechler, Director of the Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce, said it was not surprising to see in the city's financial report for 2002 that the finances of the city are in very good shape. The report highlights the fact that the city has a very diverse and stable commercial sector. At a minimum, 55 percent of the general revenues of the city are directly contributed by business taxes. Redmond needs to continue in its support of a diverse economy, including retail, high tech, digital communications, wholesale distribution, industrial and manufacturing uses in addition to finance, real estate and insurance uses. Policy FW-10 is right on target, as is FW-11. However, FW-12 is written too narrowly in that it calls out only two of the business sectors that need to be retained. As far back as 2002 the Chamber of Commerce recommended to the City Council the adoption of policies that allow businesses to reasonably expand and contract their operations with market demands, to mandate processes that support commercial operations, redevelopment and development, and to not reallocate commercial and industrial capacity to new housing uses. The wording of policies must be very clear in order to avoid confusion in implementing them. All elements of the Comprehensive Plan must be considered in concert, not just individually. Terms like "quality of life" must be used in ways which will draw attention to more than just the natural environment. Residents who want an 18-hour city are looking for recreation, entertainment, restaurant and shopping choices, all of which also fall under the term quality of life. The statement in the vision statement which references small and medium sized locally owned businesses and services and nationally and internationally recognized corporations tries to incorporate too much; she suggested the focus should simply be on a diverse economy. FW-3 should be revised by striking "Emphasize the importance" and replacing them with "Establish and support a culture of dialog and partnership." With regard to FW-4, it was suggested that the notion should be taken a step further by incorporating the federally adopted Model Regulatory Flexibility Act which requires government entities to consider potential impacts to business owners due to any proposed fees or restrictions; there should be due diligence on the part of all policy makers to fully understand the fiscal ramifications of new policies and regulations.

Ms. Nancy Bainbridge-Rogers, Cairncross and Hempleman, 524 Second Avenue, Suite 500, Seattle, spoke on behalf of the Microsoft Corporation. She reminded the Commission that throughout the process of developing the framework policies Microsoft has reiterated its desire to continue to grow in Redmond. Microsoft understands the position of the city to accommodate commercial growth provided that such growth pays its own way. The current Comprehensive Plan update does not envision expanding the existing year 2012 growth cap for commercial development in the Overlake district. The

city has indicated a willingness to open a study regarding commercial growth capacity and infrastructure, particularly transportation needs, by 2008. The text of FW-11 is not in keeping with that understanding; by adopting a specific employment base number for the year 2022, the future analysis for Overlake is contravened. The policy also does not acknowledge that the listed numbers will be updated prior to 2022. Either the concept should be deleted entirely from the framework policies, or the policy language should be amended to read “Regional planning agencies have assigned to Redmond targets of at least 65,700 people and 94,100 jobs in the city of Redmond by the year 2022. The city of Redmond should plan to accommodate these targets while recognizing that the targets will be updated before the year 2022, and that the city has already committed to initiating a study by the year 2008 regarding whether to revise the year 2012 commercial square footage target for employment in the Overlake district.” Microsoft remains cautious with regard to an urban center status for Overlake. Microsoft generally concurs with the transportation policies as presented. Nothing would be lost by deleting the first sentence of FW-39.

Mr. John Resha, 10219 161st Avenue NE, spoke as the transportation issue leader for the Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee. He indicated a general agreement with the direction the transportation policies are taking with only minor exceptions. Mobility choices mean different things to different people. It must be recognized that individuals and commuters alike will use personal vehicles as well as alternative modes of transportation. The framework policies and the transportation system should be developed to allow for that in conjunction with the overall transportation system. There needs to be a fuller understanding of why people are traveling, where they are traveling to, and when they are traveling. The city’s transportation consultant, Jim Charlier, is moving things in the right direction. Within FW-41 there is reference to the term “citizen;” the policy should be written to denote that more than just Redmond residents is intended. The need to ensure freight mobility must be stressed in the transportation policies. FW-40 specifically calls out downtown Redmond in a manner which on some level may lessen the importance of other areas; the policy could be written to refer to Redmond in general. The term “small town feel” as used in FW-39 is very subjective and unnecessary in that the balance of the document does a very good job of establishing character. Deletion of the first sentence would be one way to address the issue.

Mr. Bob Gregg, 14210 209th Avenue NE, spoke as Chair of the Government Affairs Committee for the Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce. Referring to FW-14 and the specific exclusion of the Southeast Redmond area, he commented that whether or not it was so intended, the exclusion sends a clear message to businesses in the area that the industrial uses are on their way out. With regard to FW-X, the policy having to do with shorelines, he said the East King County Coalition of Chambers of Commerce has said that any measures in excess of the minimum requirements of the Endangered Species Act and state recommendations should be driven by voluntary, incentive-based approaches.

Chair Snodgrass said no one should read into the deletion of the reference to Southeast Redmond in FW-14 any conclusion that a decision has made with regard to the zoning of

the area. The issue remains on the table for discussion as part of upcoming potential amendments.

Chair Snodgrass declared the public hearing closed.

Ms. Peckol provided the Commissioners with revisions to the text of policies FW-23 and FW-24 offered by the Parks Board and staff. The Commission accepted the revisions.

Turning to FW-11, Ms. Peckol said when the Council selected the preliminary preferred growth strategy they agreed that in 2008 there would be a reevaluation of the allowed square footage in Overlake. The promise to do so is in the resolution passed by the Council, and is in writing in the Planning Commission report to the Council recommending the preliminary preferred growth strategy. Ms. Peckol said the policy could be written to refer to this, provided it mirrors the language in the resolution.

Ms. Peckol said that specific growth targets have previously been adopted. The policy is written to reflect the preliminary preferred growths strategy selected by City Council and the size community to be planned for as part of this update. Chair Snodgrass agreed that since the numbers form the basis for all of the planning policies, they should be included in the policy.

Commissioner Allen said she would like to see the word “projected” added in front of “future population” in the policy. Ms. Peckol said the numbers in fact are not projections but rather planning parameters or growth targets.

Commissioner McCarthy suggested including in the policy language about revisiting the numbers in 2008. Chair Snodgrass held that because the promise to revisit the numbers is in writing there is no need to revise the language of the policy. Commissioners Dunn and Petitpas concurred, and Commissioner Allen said she could go either way. Commissioner Dunn commented that the growth targets may need to be updated for other reasons and expressed concern about referring in the policy to only the agreement for Overlake. The Commission agreed to recommend the policy as staff proposed.

Ms. Peckol offered a proposal to combine policies FW-20 and FW-22 into a single policy. Chair Snodgrass noted that the concepts from both policies were all included in the single policy with the exception of “preserves its natural settings.” He commented that the Bear Creek open space and stream system are examples of natural settings that need to be preserved. Ms. Peckol suggested adding after “small town look and feel” the words “preserves its natural setting and integrates urban park-like qualities.” The Commission accepted the revision.

Turning to policy FW-25, Ms. Peckol proposed combining the ideas of “f” and “g” to read “Establish priorities for improvements and provide reasonable certainty that needed facility and service improvements are completed.” There was agreement to accept the proposal, adding to the end of the sentence “within a reasonable time.”

Chair Snodgrass asked if it would be appropriate to include in FW-25 anything about concurrency. Terry Marpert, planner, suggested that as written subpart “d” includes the notion of concurrency.

There was agreement to revise FW-3 to read “Establish and support a culture of dialogue....”

With regard to FW-4, Commissioner Dunn thought it would be appropriate to call out specifically the impacts relative to small businesses. Ms. Peckol said the intent of the policy is evaluating how well the city is doing in implementing the plan, vision and policies. The concept of impacts on small businesses would be more in keeping with FW-2.

Chair Snodgrass saw no reason to implement a specific policy relating to considering impacts on small business. He suggested the city already does that, and if it does not the Chamber of Commerce and others will likely express significant concerns.

Commissioner Dunn commented that mere evaluation will not be enough; there will need to be action as well and the policy should be written to say that. Commissioner McCarthy proposed adding to the policy the phrase “and take action where needed.” The Commission agreed to the revision.

With regard to the proposed new policy FW-X, Ms. Peckol noted that the policy was written in response to comments made by the Commission regarding the need for a framework policy covering shorelines.

Commissioner Petitpas suggested adding the word “shorelines” to the list in FW-5 and deleting proposed FW-X.

Ms. Peckol commented that issues such as visual access and preference for uses that are dependent on shorelines are unique to shoreline management and do not apply to other types of environmental areas.

****BREAK****

It was concluded that proposed policy FW-X should be included as written.

Commissioner Dunn questioned use of the phrase “encourage provision of” as used in FW-6. It was agreed that the words “provision of” should be deleted.

Ms. Peckol noted that policy FW-12 as written is much the same as an existing policy in the Comprehensive Plan. The concept is meeting needs in the community through having a better variety of retail and service businesses.

Commissioner Dunn suggested using the word “serve” in place of “meet the needs of.”

Commissioner Petitpas proposed that as written the policy could be too narrowly construed. Chair Snodgrass held that the policy does not exclude other business choices, such as manufacturing and industry.

Commissioner McCarthy suggested that FW-12 as written can stand on its own merit without revision. It was agreed to retain FW-12 as written.

It was agreed to retain the word “appropriate” in FW-13.

With regard to FW-14, Chair Snodgrass reminded the Commission of the upcoming privately initiated amendment to allow more housing in SE Redmond. He noted that while there is no intent to rezone the entire area for residential uses, including industrial uses specifically in the framework policies could preclude considering other uses. It would be appropriate to leave industrial uses out of the policy at least until the city makes a decision on the proposed amendment.

Ms. Peckol suggested that the phrase “portions of the Bear Creek neighborhood” could be revised to read “portions of the Bear Creek and Southeast Redmond neighborhoods.” She allowed that the focus for housing would be on only a portion of the SE Redmond area.

Commissioner McCarthy said there are existing businesses in Southeast Redmond that should be recognized for the value they bring to the community and should be retained. He agreed that there is no move afoot to rezone all of Southeast Redmond.

Commissioner Petitpas suggested revising the language to read “retain and encourage research and development, high-tech and manufacturing uses in portions of Overlake, Willows and Southeast Redmond.” Her suggestion was endorsed by the rest of the Commission.

Ms. Peckol suggested deleting the word “appropriate” from several different bullet points under FW-14. The Commissioners concurred.

The Commissioners agreed with staff’s suggestion to delete the second sentence of policy FW-15 since it was similar to language in the proposed transportation framework policies.

The word “appropriate” was deleted from policy FW-16.

It was agreed that the phrase at the end of policy FW-17 was awkward as written. It was agreed to rewrite it to read “Make each neighborhood a better place to live and work by preserving and fostering each neighborhood’s unique character, while providing for compatible residential and business growth.”

Moving to the transportation policies, Chair Snodgrass raised the issue of “small town feel” as noted in FW-39. He allowed that while Redmond is not a small town anymore, many still want it to feel like one.

Commissioner Petitpas agreed. She noted that limiting height can go a long way toward giving the perception of a small street. Green streets provide the same feeling.

Commissioner Dunn said the second sentence of FW-39 is the language relating to transportation. She suggested that the first sentence could be eliminated as it only refers to character, and the general character statements should all be housed in one section.

Mr. Marpert argued that as used in the policy the language regarding small town feel has a direct implication for how streets are designed. As such it is truly a transportation issue. Chair Snodgrass said he could accept having references to character in the transportation policies as well as in other places.

Commissioner McCarthy said Redmond is a growing city wanting to retain its small town character. There was agreement to incorporate a new policy in the community character section reading “Retain Redmond’s small town feel while accommodating urban growth.”

It was agreed to leave FW-39 unchanged.

With regard to FW-40, Commissioner McCarthy argued in favor of changing “between” to “among” to further the notion of being more inclusive of various areas of the City.

Commissioner Dunn proposed “Develop strong connections of local transportation systems that include multimodal transportation infrastructure and services that connect residents and employees within Redmond to downtown, neighborhood retail, employment centers, schools, parks and other destinations.”

The conclusion was that the policy should be worded to say “Develop strong local transportation connections for people, goods and freight among Redmond’s downtown, residences, shopping, employment, government, parks and schools that are multimodal, well designed, and appropriately located.”

Regarding use of the word “citizens” in FW-41, it was agreed to have the policy read “Promote mobility choices by developing a range of practical transportation alternatives.”

Chair Snodgrass suggested adding to FW-42 the notion of regional high-speed mass transit serving Redmond. Mr. Marpert commented that the policy is written to be broad and reminded the Commissioners that individual policies to fit under the framework policies will be developed later in the process.

With regard to the goals, Commissioner Dunn suggested rewording the fifth bullet to read “To maintain a strong and diverse economy and to provide a business climate that retains and attracts locally owned companies as well as internationally recognized corporations.” The Commission agreed with the suggestion.

Referring to the proposed vision statement, Commissioner Dunn said the section on page 2 that talks about Overlake should stress the need to make the area green by using plazas, parks and street trees.

Chair Snodgrass said the section that talks about the Burlington Northern right-of-way having been transformed into an urban green space could be taken to mean a commercial street front, a pedestrian mall or a linear park. Ms. Peckol said the intent was to bring in some of the ideas generated on Design Day, namely a green space with some nodes of retail along the right-of-way.

Motion to extend the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m. was made by Commissioner Petitpas. Second was by Commissioner Dunn and the motion carried unanimously.

In the vision statement, Ms. Peckol proposed adding “to achieve community objectives.” to the end of the first paragraph. Also on page 2, she suggested moving the last sentence of the second paragraph concerning residential neighborhoods to the beginning of the paragraph. The Commissioners agreed to add the phrase “property owner’s rights” to the second to the last sentence on page 3 concerning access to shorelines to denote what is being protected.

There were no revisions made to the proposed narrative text for the Chapter.

Motion to adopt the goals, vision and framework policies as revised was made by Commissioner Dunn. Second was by Commissioner McCarthy and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve the transmittal memo, subject to revisions yet to be made in conjunction with Chair Snodgrass, was made by Commissioner Dunn. Second was by Commissioner Petitpas and the motion carried unanimously.

STUDY SESSION

Shoreline Master Program Update, DGA 02-015

This agenda item was put off to another meeting.

REPORTS

Mr. Marpert took a moment to provide answers to questions previously raised by the Commission. With regard to where segways are allowed in Redmond, it was noted that there are no specific laws restricting them in the city. Washington state law allows them to be used on paths and sidewalks.

On the issue of sequencing traffic lights on 148th Avenue NE, Mr. Marpert noted that all of the signals in Redmond are traffic actuated. The signal controllers at each intersection can change the timing in response to traffic demand. At some times of the day certain

signals in the street have fixed timing plans to allow for traffic progression at fixed rates. There is room for improvement, however.

The wall structure being constructed along West Lake Sammamish Parkway near Marymoor Park is needed to accommodate the roadway widening.

Commissioner McCarthy commented that the wall appears to be much higher in places than it needs to be. Mr. Marpert said he would check into that.

SCHEDULING/TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING(S): None

ADJOURN

Chair Snodgrass adjourned the meeting at 10:09 p.m.

Minutes Approved On:

Recording Secretary:
